

Elm Street School replacement among upcoming plans for MHPSD

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NEWS FILE PHOTO A replacement for Elm Street School in the River Flats is among major capital project plans in the immediate future for the Medicine Hat Public School Division. The school is pictured in this 2013 file photo.

The Medicine Hat Public School Division has shared its annual education results report from the 2023-24 school year, including a summary of financial information and a three-year capital plan that looks to replace Elm Street School in the 2025-26 year.

The division reported more than \$96 million in total expenditures, \$3.5 million more than budgeted for 2023-24, and reported an increase of more than \$2 million in purchase services, supplies and contracts as well as staff salaries and debt servicing.

The report also highlights two schools that will be undergoing a replacement and modernization, as well as a plan to build a new elementary school in Medicine Hat.

Next year Elm Street School is to undergo a replacement that will cost the division more than \$17.6 million, and the following year, in 2026-27, Alexandra Middle School will undergo a modernization pegged at more than \$34 million.

The division also plans to spend more than \$27 million to build a new elementary school in the Hamptons as part of a three-year capital plan from 2023 to 2026.

The division also measured how schools, students and staff performed over a four-year period from 2021 to 2024 in four major categories.

In the optimal learning category, the MHPSD reports students from Grades 6 to 12 are slightly less interested and motivated in schoolwork than the national average, and Medicine Hat students feel slightly less challenged in English, math and science.

On a 10-point scale the division was on par with the national average in areas including effective learning time, relevance, positive learning climate and expectations for success.

The division was slightly ahead of provincial averages in education quality and student learning outcomes in the program of studies, however a dropout rate of 2.9 per cent is also above the provincial average.

Medicine Hat students are on par with national averages when it comes to positive behaviour at school and positive teacher-student relationships; however Medicine Hat public schools report more bullying than the national average.

In the 'thinking & acting inclusively' category, the division sits slightly above provincial average as far as 'increase in safe parental involvement indicators' and 'increase in inclusive educational indicators of student inclusion and supported families.'

The wellness category reports students are on par with the national averages in positive sense of belonging, positive relationships, as well as students with moderate or high levels of anxiety, with local students Grade 4-6 reporting higher than average levels.

Provincially the public division is above average in inclusive education indicators of student inclusion and supported families, and on par with the province in 'increase in safe & caring parental involvement indicators.'

When it comes to truth and reconciliation, MHPSD reports 81 per cent of its First Nations, Métis and Inuit students were in attendance, up one per cent from last year. As well, a dropout rate of 6.2 is down for the division, but still above the provincial average of 5.2.

